

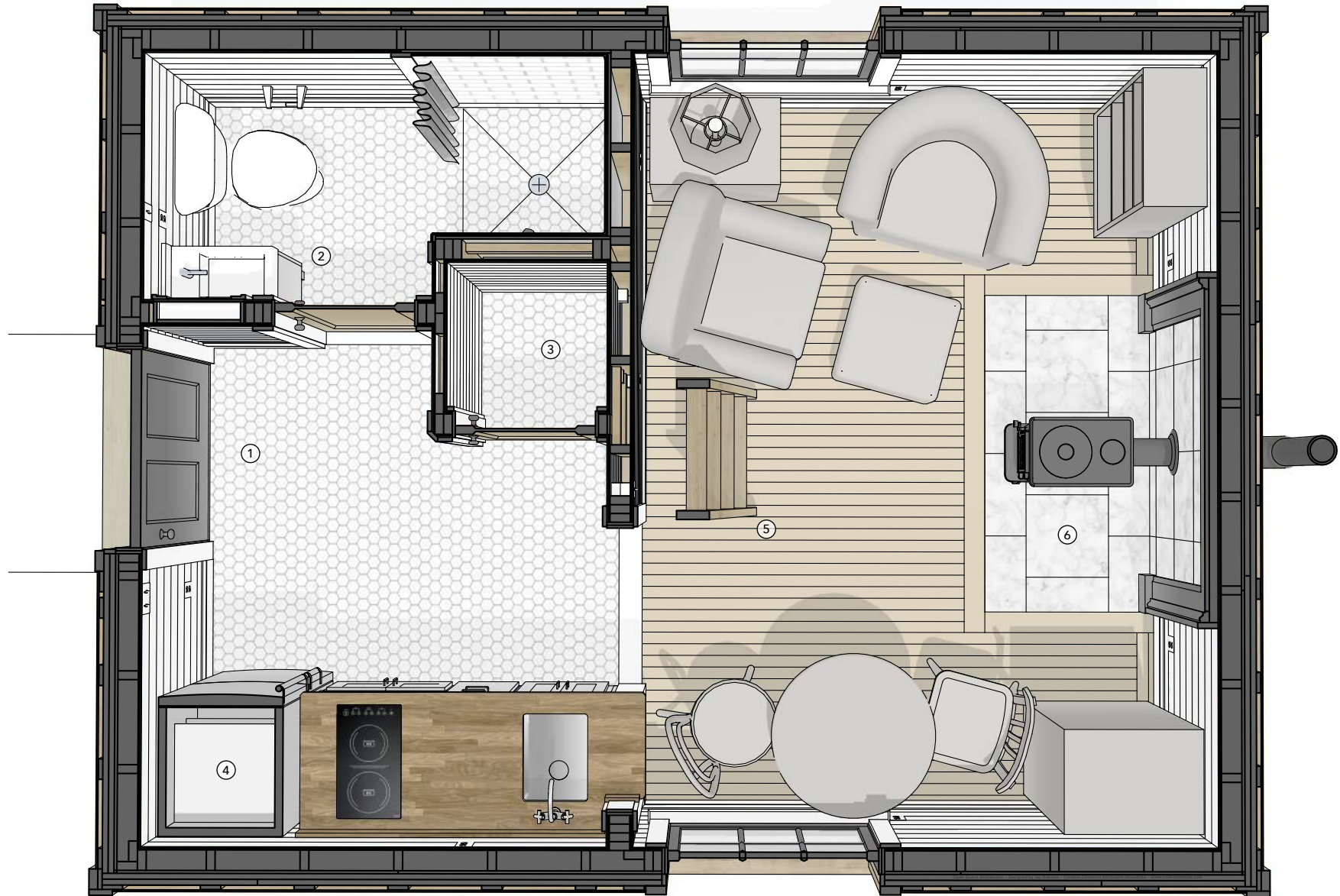


In 1845, Henry David Thoreau built a small cottage near Walden Pond, just outside Concord, Massachusetts. For two years, he lived in relative isolation, penning his ideas. His writings are now a cornerstone of American thought. Countless folks have cited Thoreau's cabin as inspiration for tiny house living, so I wanted to give more people the chance to live this simple dream.

THOREAU CABIN DESIGN OVERVIEW

BY JAY OSBORNE

Thoreau's original cottage was just a single room. My design takes the same proportions as his home and gives it the amenities commonly used in today's tiny houses (including insulation, electricity, a kitchenette, and a bathroom). Natural materials let it blend into the landscape. One person (or a couple) could live here full-time, or else come to escape from the world for awhile.

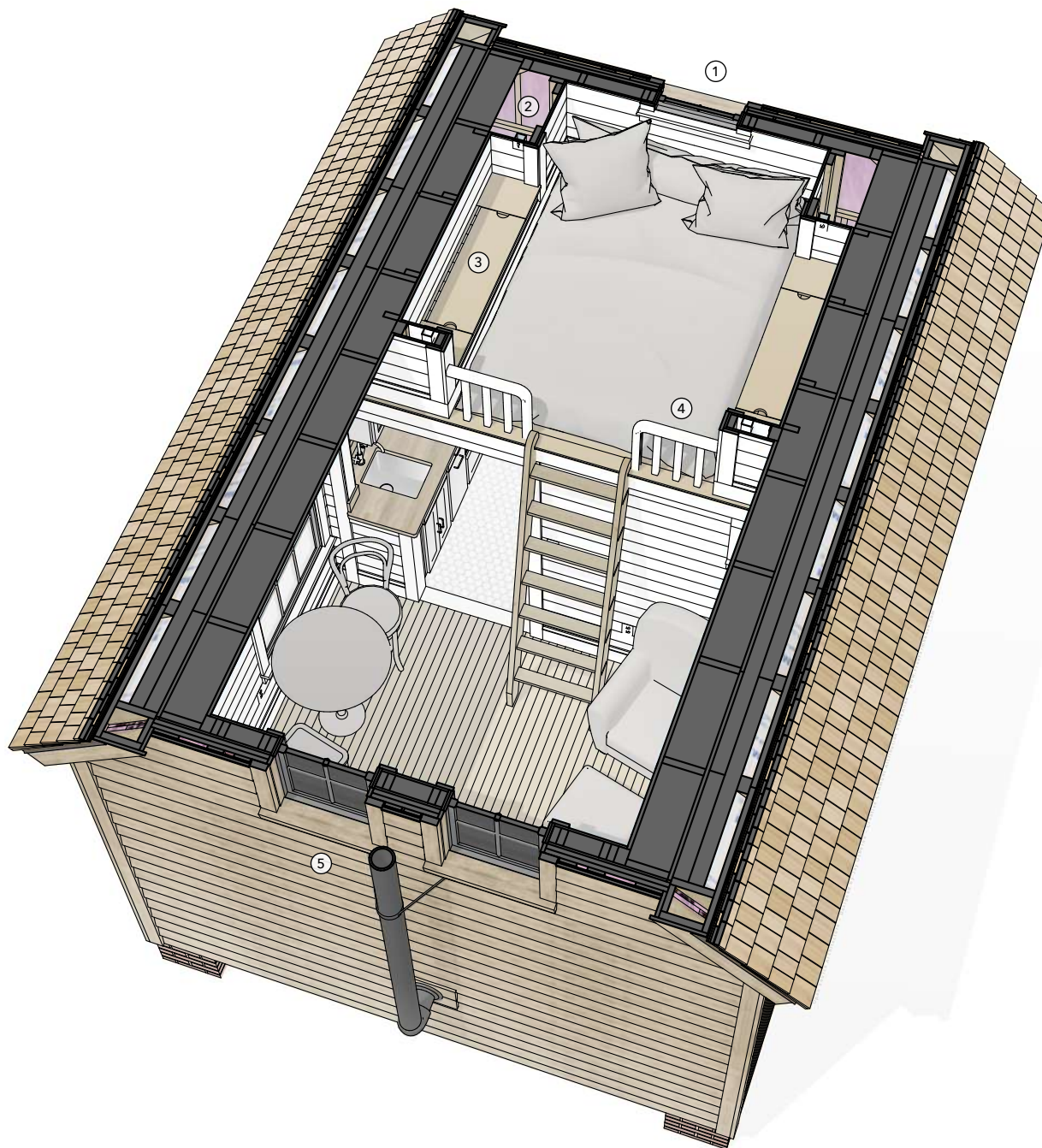


(1) The house is divided into three areas: a service zone, a living area, and a sleeping loft. You enter at the service area, with the tiled floor. Instead of being as open as possible, this layout maintains privacy. (2) The bathroom has the essentials. The tiny sink is optional, since the kitchen sink is nearby. (3) This closet could hold coats, luggage, a laundry machine, shelving, etc.

THOREAU CABIN PLAN PERSPECTIVE

BY JAY OSBORNE

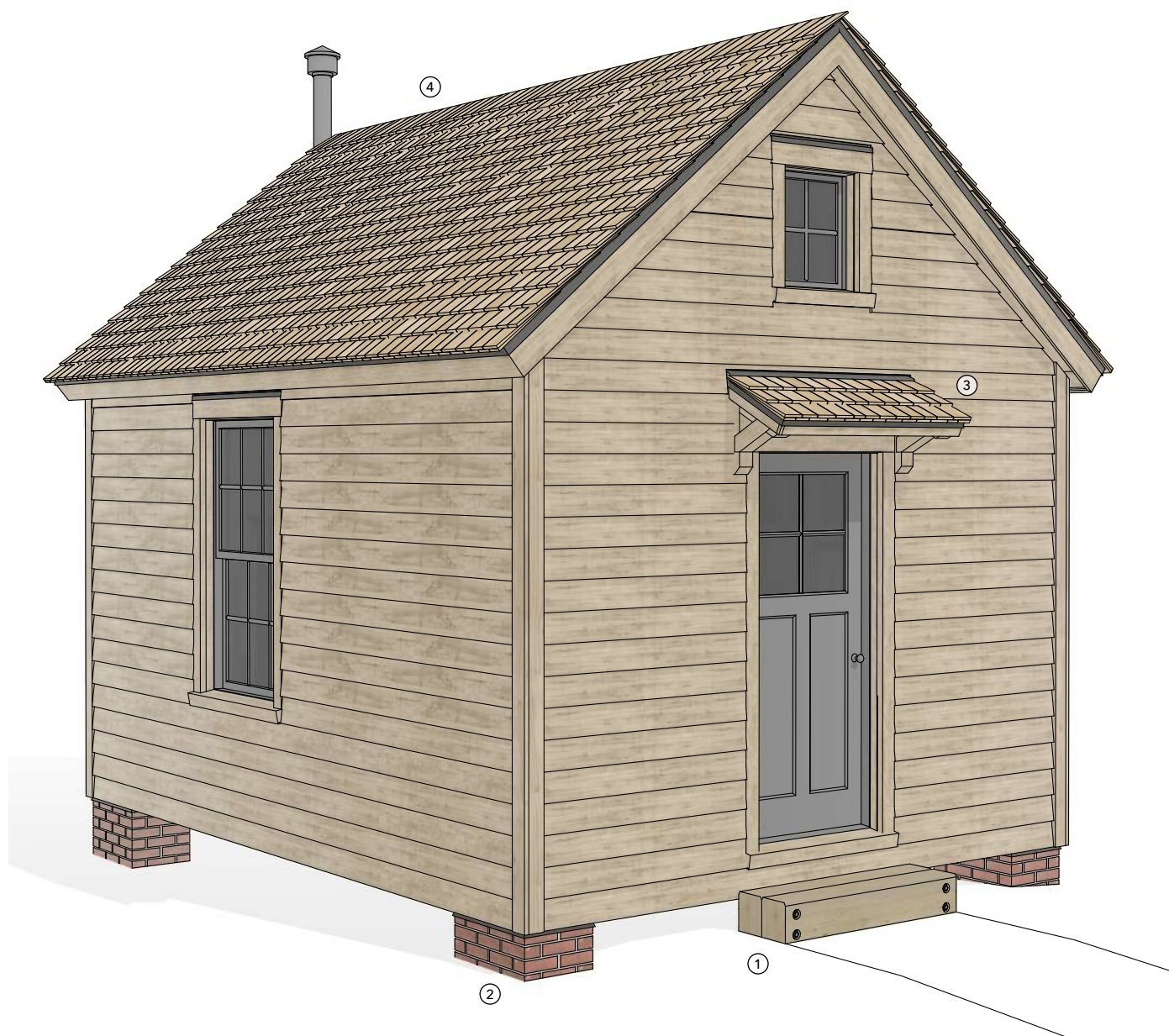
(4) The kitchenette has small fixtures, but they work. A 2-burner cooktop and a small sink give enough counter space. A microwave/convection oven combo is appropriate for this house's size. (5) A ladder heads up to the loft. Centered, it divides the living area into two: for different kinds of seating. (6) The woodstove has a tile floor and backing (allows smaller clearances).



(1) The loft is meant primarily for sleeping, but it could also be a great spot to curl up with a book. The window prevents any feelings of claustrophobia. (2) The bed includes alcoves for storage. Part of the wall bumps outward, to improve the ability to sit up and read a book. Stack pillows in each corner. (3) A built-in chest lets you organize and hide anything you don't use often.

THOREAU CABIN
PLAN VIEW AT LOFT
 BY JAY OSBORNE

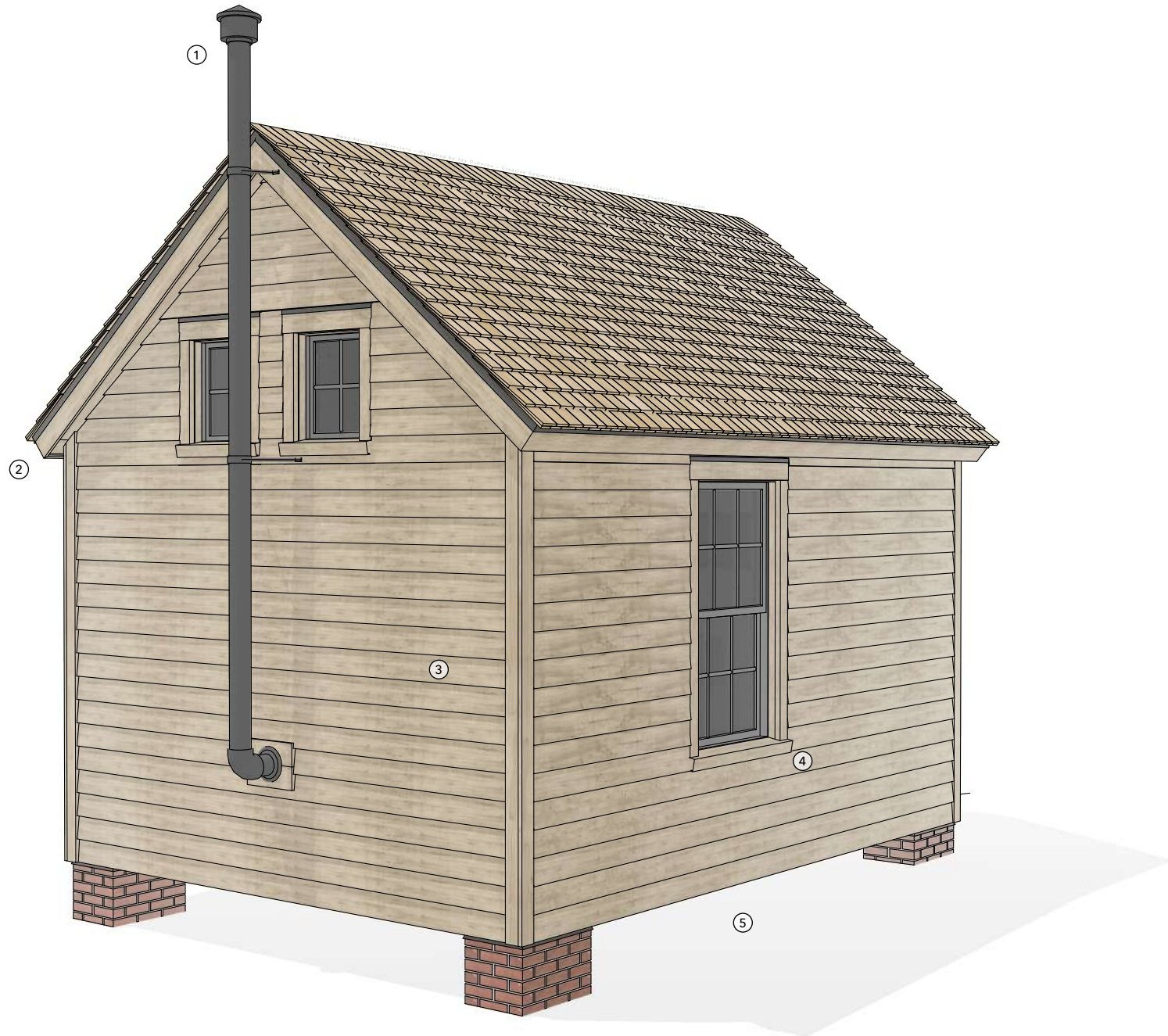
(4) The low railings provide handholds when descending the ladder. And also a psychological sense of security. A queen-sized mattress covers all the floor surface of the loft. (5) The two windows above the living room flank the chimney pipe. These windows pour daylight into the space, and let you peer outward from the sleeping loft, which makes it all more open and airy.



(1) A railroad tie makes a step at the entry. It's cut into halves, bolted together. Necessary to keep the siding off the ground, this step is allowed by code, but any additional steps would trigger many more requirements.
 (2) Brick piers hold up the house. They don't require extensive excavation of the site, which minimizes the earthwork, and lets the house be in a forest.

THOREAU CABIN
FRONT OF THE HOUSE
 BY JAY OSBORNE

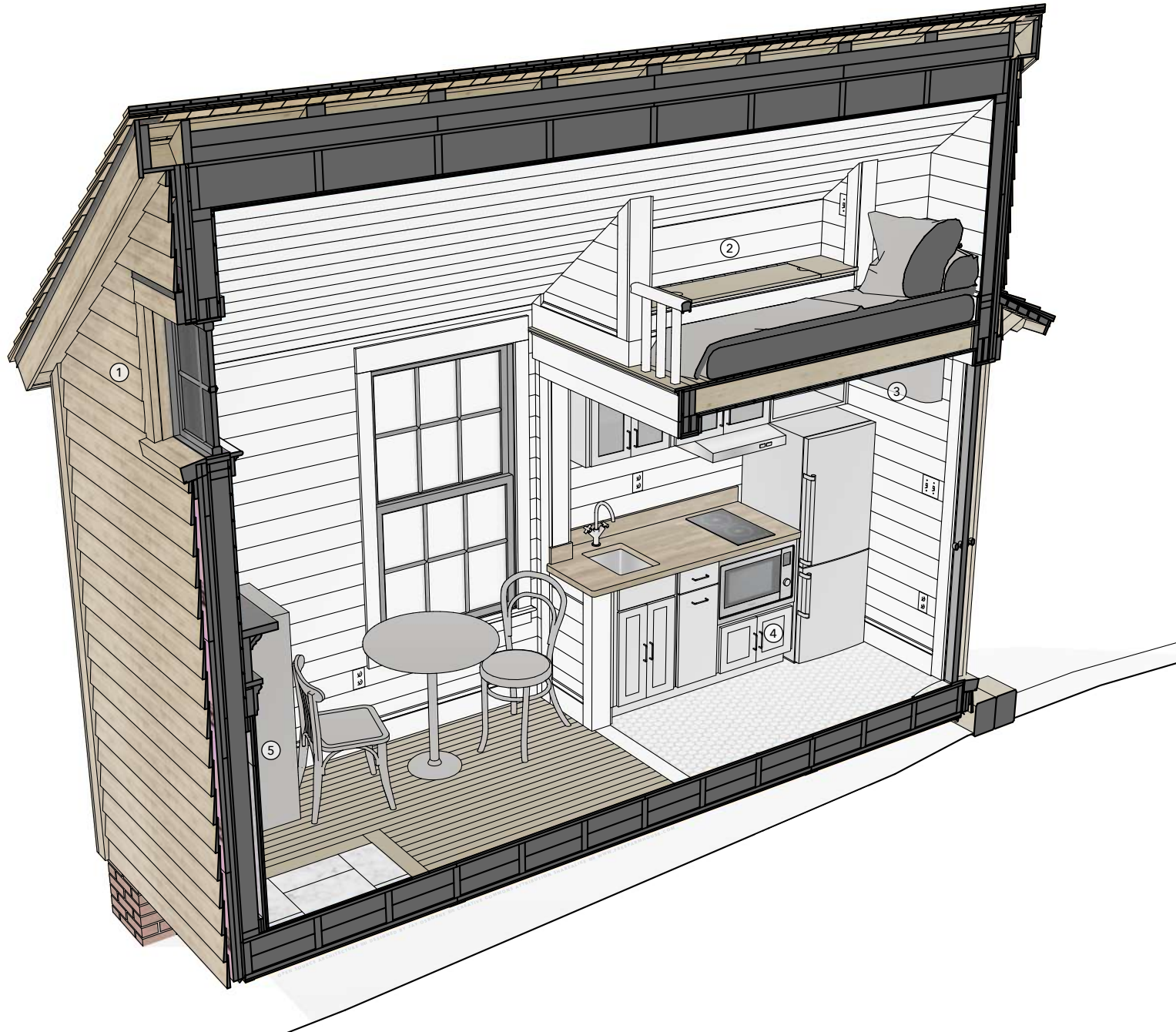
(3) The door has a small canopy, which protects it from long-term moisture damage. The front could also have a small 5x10 porch with 2 rocking chairs.
 (4) Natural wood siding lets the house blend into its natural environment. The roof is covered in cedar shingles. The walls may also be shingled, as in Thoreau's original hut. Or, to save costs, use wavy corrugated steel roofing.



(1) The chimney pipe is located on the back of the house. It could instead be a brick chimney (as in the original 1845 cabin) but that would demand significantly more material and cost. Also, that would make upper windows more difficult to include. (2) Roof eaves do wonders to protect siding from decay. If you include gutters, then you can also collect rainwater in a cistern.

THOREAU CABIN
BACK OF THE HOUSE
 BY JAY OSBORNE

(3) Ideally, the bevel lap siding is of the same wood as the cedar shingles. It could also be of fiber cement clapboards, or even wavy corrugated steel. Don't ever use vinyl siding. (4) The side window is slightly off-center, as it also was in the original hut. Symmetry isn't always worth the compromises. (5) The ground slopes down to the back (easier to service the floor below).

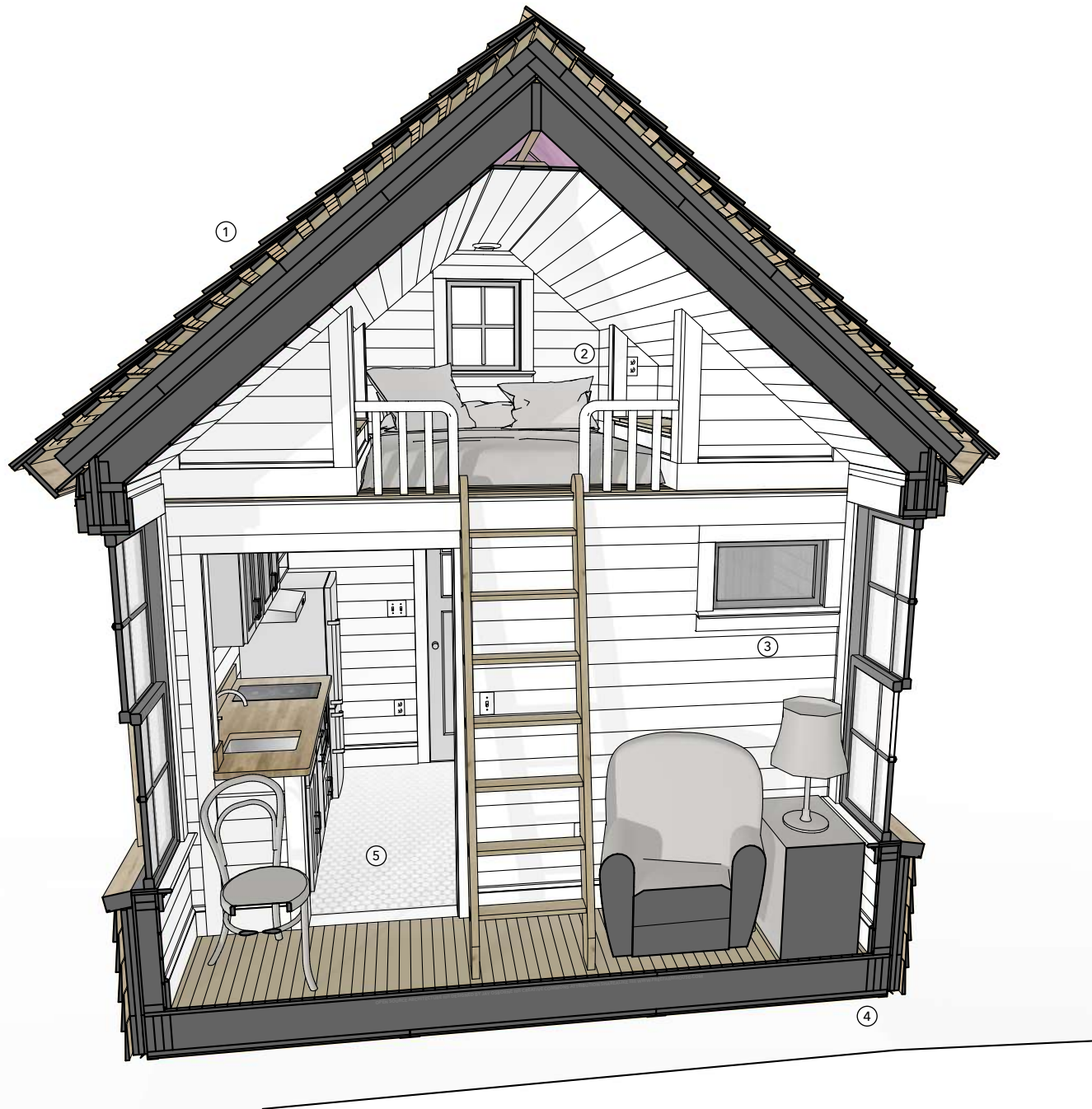


(1) The living room's upper windows not only balance the daylighting, but also makes the loft feel less claustrophobic. It doesn't take much—just a small connection to the outdoors (whichever way you're looking). (2) The chest, openable with a piano hinge, keeps the shelf mostly clutter-free. Since that surface is raised above the bedding level, dust and lint won't collect on it.

THOREAU CABIN LONGITUDINAL SECTION

BY JAY OSBORNE

(3) This ceiling is only 7 feet high. That's the minimum for most houses, but new tiny house codes allow it to be a few inches shorter. Still, 7 feet allows for trim around a standard-height door. (4) A microwave / convection oven under the counter saves space in the kitchenette. You can still bake a pizza. (5) The surround has a tile heat shield, so the woodstove can be put near it.



(1) The roofing and siding both use rainscreen systems and rigid insulation. That improves the longevity of siding/roofing, minimizes thermal bridging, and protects the water-resistant membrane. With today's insulation needs, such assemblies make the most sense. **(2)** The loft space will feel tent-like. The corner walls bump out. You can stack pillows and sit up against them.

THOREAU CABIN TRANSVERSE SECTION

BY JAY OSBORNE

(3) The bathroom has a small clerestory window opening to the living area. This allows sunlight in from the adjacent window. And, with both windows open, natural ventilation. To increase privacy, use fogged or stained glass. **(4)** The floor is insulated. The precise assembly will depend on the climate. **(5)** Tiled floors at the service zone helps the entry function like a mudroom.